DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 603 FL 025 648

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TITLE Elementary Foreign Language Immersion Programs: Amount of Direct Instruction in the Foreign Language.
PUB DATE 1998-12-00
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Communication; Classroom Techniques; Curriculum Design; Elementary Education; *Grammar; *Immersion Programs; Instructional Effectiveness; Language of Instruction; *Language Teachers; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Sentence Structure; Teacher Attitudes; *Time Factors (Learning); *Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS Content Area Teaching

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the relationship between the degree to which students in an elementary foreign language immersion program use appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, and how many minutes per week teachers use direct instruction to teach these skills. Elementary foreign language teachers (n=53) were surveyed to (1) investigate their beliefs about how often their students use appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, (2) determine how much time immersion teachers spend on direct instruction each week, and (3) examine how satisfied they are with the amount of time they spend on these skills. Quantitative results suggest that students do not frequently use these skills appropriately, and that use of the skills improves with the length of enrollment in the immersion program. Qualitative findings suggest that teachers have very different opinions about how much time should be spent on direct instruction; some wish they could spend much more time, while others are content with integrating these skills into content instruction. Suggestions for further research to address this discrepancy are offered. The questionnaire and cover letters to teachers and superintendents are appended. (Contains 10 references.) (MSE)

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Running Head: IMMERSION AND DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Elementary Foreign Language Immersion Programs: Amount of Direct Instruction in the Foreign Language

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December, 1998

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Abstract

This research study investigated the relationship between how often students enrolled in an elementary foreign language immersion program exhibit appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, and how many minutes per week teachers use direct instruction to teach these skills. A total of 53 elementary foreign language immersion teachers responded to a survey that was constructed to: 1) investigate teachers' beliefs about how often their students use appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, 2) determine how much time immersion teachers are spending on direct instruction each week and 3) examine how satisfied teachers are with the amount of time they spend on these skills. Quantitative results suggest that students do not frequently exhibit appropriate grammar acquisition, sentence structure, and vocabulary. The results also suggest that students' ability to portray these skills does improve with the amount of time they are enrolled in an immersion program. The qualitative results, however, suggest that teachers have very different opinions about how much time should be spent on direct instruction. Some teachers wish they could spend much more time, while others are content with integrating these skills into content areas. The researcher discusses a number of limitations, and gives suggestions to future researchers. These suggestions may clear up the discrepancy that was apparent between the quantitative and qualitative results in this study.

Elementary Foreign Language Immersion Programs, and the Amount of Direct Instruction in the Foreign Language

Introduction

Statement of Problem

The future generations of this country are going to be expected to communicate with many groups of diverse people; proficiency in a foreign language is the key to successful communication (Postero, 1993). An increasing number of immigrants are arriving to this country. Our educational system needs to provide both native and immigrant students with the skills to communicate with each other, as well as with other groups of diverse people. Technology is continually increasing in today's world; therefore, communication between nations can be fairly fast and efficient (Griffin, 1993). Although many times an interpreter or other device is available to help with the translation, it is often not the most efficient method. Proficiency in a second language is the key to efficiency (Postero, 1993).

In the past few decades, our educational system's foreign language programs have begun in our nation's secondary schools. Often the studies of foreign languages begin in seventh, eighth, or ninth grade; this enables students to pursue the study of a foreign language for up to six years. Secondary foreign language classes usually take place for about forty-five minutes a day, five days a week; unfortunately, the amount of time spent in the classroom is often not enough to produce proficiency in a second language (Griffin, 1993). However, our nation's children need to become proficient in at least one foreign language (Postero, 1993).

In order for our children to develop the skills necessary for the future, we must implement a more efficient way of educating our children in a foreign language. For a number of years, many school districts have been implementing a foreign language program in their elementary schools, with the hope that an early start will lead to more fluency (Vigil, 1993). The types of programs offered in elementary foreign language classrooms vary greatly; some school districts require fifteen to twenty minutes of study each day, while others have completely immersed their students in the target foreign language from the first day of kindergarten (Lipton, 1994). Immersion programs are " . . . an approach to foreign language instruction in which the regular curriculum is taught in the foreign language" (Met, 1990, p. 434).

Total immersion classrooms are taught entirely in the target foreign language from kindergarten up through third or fourth grade. English instruction is introduced gradually, until half the day is spent in English and half in the foreign language. Partial immersion classrooms are taught in both the target foreign language and English; usually half the day is spent in English, and half in the target language. Two-way immersion classrooms bring together native speakers of English and native speakers of the target language. This model allows both groups of students to become fluent in both languages.

School districts that have implemented elementary immersion programs obviously have a rationale for doing so: they want their students to become proficient in a second language by the end of high school (Postero, 1993). However, there have been many concerns from parents, administrators, school board members, and secondary foreign language teachers about the research basis for elementary foreign language programs (Lipton, 1994). Many people are concerned about the children's level of proficiency in the foreign language; therefore, the following review of literature will address these concerns. It will discuss students' level of

proficiency in the foreign language. It will then further discuss various reasons why students have achieved this level of proficiency. The amount of direct instruction done in the foreign language will also be discussed, because direct instruction has an impact on students' proficiency in the target language.

In order to fully understand the basis of this literature review, we must operationally define a number of terms. The review will focus on the level of proficiency in the target language. The level of proficiency is defined by the student's ability to covey meaning while speaking, as well as his or her ability to speak grammatically correct while using proper sentence structure. The review will also focus on the amount of direct instruction done in the classroom. This is defined by the amount of time teachers spend teaching grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary in the target language.

This research study will examine the amount of direct instruction elementary immersion teachers use in their classrooms, as well as how well teachers think their students speak the target language. It will also examine teachers' reasons for their decisions.

Review of Literature

Much of the previous research on elementary foreign language immersion programs lack a solid methodology. A number of studies use invalid testing instruments and have poor research designs (Lipton, 1994). However, a few studies within the last decade have been conducted with a solid research methodology; these studies have revealed somewhat conflicting results, but nevertheless have provided us with invaluable information. These studies are going to be the focus of this literature review, because they provide us with a more solid foundation for conducting much needed further research.

Many studies have specifically analyzed the effects of immersion programs on student achievement. Several of these studies have looked at the relationship between immersion programs and student achievement in the foreign language. Day and Shapson (1987) and Harley (1987) conducted two such studies; both found elementary foreign language immersion programs to have positive effects on students' proficiency in the foreign language. Day and Shapson (1987) assessed third grade students enrolled in a French immersion program in British Columbia, Canada. The results included qualitative and quantitative data.

The researchers used the British Columbia French Speaking Test: Grade 3 to assess these children. One hundred and ten students were randomly selected from immersion programs, and twenty-five native French speakers acted as the control group. Qualitative data revealed that the French immersion students were developing good communication skills. However, quantitative findings revealed that much improvement was needed in French grammar and vocabulary. The researchers concluded that improvement might be needed, because French is being learned through the content of other curriculum areas. Often teachers reward correct responses based on the material being covered, not on vocabulary and grammar acquisition (Day & Shapson, 1987).

Harley (1987) also studied early French immersion students. He compared three groups of learners: an early immersion group, a later immersion group, and a group of students who participated in forty minutes of French instruction daily. The early immersion group began immersion between kindergarten and fourth grade, and the late group began between fifth and eighth grade. A native French speaker interviewed each subject; each interview was analyzed, and each subject's speaking ability was assessed. Qualitative findings revealed that the early immersion students were generally more fluent in French. All three groups exhibited the ability

to use various tenses, but none of the three were able to speak with the same level of fluency as a native speaker.

Although both Harley (1987) and Day and Shapson (1987) found that early immersion programs result in greater competency of the language, Griffin (1993) found conflicting data. Twenty-six students from a private high school in the San Francisco Bay Area were used for Griffin's (1993) study on the long term effects of elementary foreign language programs. The sample was divided into two groups: students who began studying French between kindergarten and fourth grade, and students who began studying French between fifth and eighth grade. During their final years of high school, the subjects were given two standardized tests, both of which measured their competency in French. Results indicated no significant difference in achievement between the two groups. Griffin concluded that more years of study does not result in "... greater proficiency in reading, writing, or speaking in the second language" (p. 45). The researcher concluded that second language acquisition is not directly related to the number of years of study (Griffin, 1993).

There are a number of possible reasons Day and Shapson (1987), Harley (1987), and Griffin (1993) found somewhat conflicting results. Perhaps the conflicting data was due to the studies' methodologies. Day and Shapson (1987) found that immersion programs positively affected students' proficiency in the foreign language. However, they compared one hundred and ten immersion students to twenty-five native French speakers. The difference in sample size may have significantly impacted the results of the study. The subjects in the control group were matched with the subjects in the experimental group on socio-economic status, but the researchers did not mention the level of achievement in either group. The control group may have had a number of low achieving students, while the students participating in the immersion

program may have been very high achievers. Harley (1987) and Griffin (1993) did use an equal number of subjects in each group, but the amount of subjects used was very small. Harley (1987) used forty-seven students, while Griffin (1993) used twenty-six. The small numbers, and lack of random sampling, may have impacted the results. Despite the conflicting data, all three studies did find that students had difficulty with both sentence structure and grammar.

Lindholm and Fairchild (1988) conducted a study similar to the three previously discussed, but their purpose was slightly different. Like Day and Shapson (1987), Harley (1987), and Griffin (1993), Lindholm and Fairchild (1988) wanted to determine the effects of elementary school immersion programs on students' proficiency in the target language. The target language in this case was Spanish. However, unlike the three previous studies, Lindholm and Fairchild (1993) also assessed native Spanish speakers' achievement in English, and both groups' achievement in other curriculum areas.

The researchers conducted a longitudinal study over a period of six years in the San Diego City Schools. Each year, both English proficient and limited English proficient students were given English and Spanish standardized tests. Results of the study revealed that both groups of students demonstrated achievement gains in English reading and math, and Spanish reading and math. The researchers concluded that elementary bilingual immersion programs are beneficial for both native speakers of English and native speakers of the target language. Both groups acquire competency in their second language, as well as improve in math and reading in their native language (Lindholm & Fairchild, 1993). However, it must be noted that these standardized test scores did not assess the oral proficiency of the students. The study also does not mention the assessment of the students' grammar or sentence structure; therefore, it is not possible to conclude if these students had difficulty with these skills.

Similar results were found in elementary French immersion programs in British Columbia (Day & Shapson, 1988). The study examined early and late French immersion students in French reading, listening, and speaking. The study also compared immersion students' achievement in English reading, math, and science to non-immersion native English speaking students. Immersion students outperformed non-immersion students in all three curriculum areas. Results also indicated that early immersion students were generally more fluent in French, but both immersion groups needed improvement in French grammar and vocabulary. Day and Shapson (1988) concluded that " . . . it should not be an unrealistic aim for immersion programs to enable all students to speak clearly, effectively, and reasonably correctly in French . . . at no cost to their progress in their native language or other school subjects" (p. 30-31). They do suggest, however, that French grammar and vocabulary need improvement.

Similar results were also found in Jones (1996) study with Welsh immersion students. She used 45 English-speaking students who were enrolled in 5 different immersion programs. She also used 10 Welsh speaking students for comparison. The participants were asked to retell a story, partake in a group discussion, and then write the story in their own words. The data were analyzed using a communicative competence framework comprising grammatical, sociolinguistic discourse, and strategic competencies. Results indicated that the participants' grammatical and sociolinguistic aspects were weaker than their discourse and strategic competence. The researcher concluded that much improvement is needed in grammar, as well as the students' ability to recognize socially appropriate language in context (Jones, 1996)

Day and Shapson (1988), Lindholm and Fairchild (1988) and Jones (1996) have revealed a great deal of data that may aid future researchers. However, like most studies, their methodologies are not perfect. Future studies may want to consider some slight changes to the

methodology, before any of these studies is replicated. Jones (1996) used 45 English speaking students, and only 10 native Welsh speakers. Lindholm and Fairchild (1988) were forced into using a convenience sample of seventy-eight students who had participated in the bilingual immersion program since preschool, kindergarten, or first grade. The study also used thirty-two English proficient students, and forty-six limited English proficient students. The differences in sample size may have affected the results. However, Day and Shapson (1988) were able to randomly select their students; their sample resulted in one hundred fifty-six early immersion students, and one hundred twenty-six late immersion students. The control group only consisted of eighteen students. The French Reading Tests were, however, " . . . designed to preserve as much as possible the essential features of communication" (p. 10); the reliability for the tests ranged from .78 to .84 for both the early and late immersion groups.

Although each study has some limitations, collectively these studies present some very relevant information to our educational system. Obviously more solid research needs to be done, for very few studies have been conducted in the last six or seven years. A future study may want to consider the amount of direct instruction elementary immersion teachers use in their classroom, for most research has shown that students participating in immersion programs have difficulty with grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary of the target language. Previous studies (i.e.: Day & Shapson, 1987, Day & Shapson, 1988, and Jones, 1996) have hinted that often immersion programs lack direct instruction, because the emphasis of the program is on the content of subject being studied. Therefore, it may be beneficial to determine how much direct instruction students are receiving in the classroom, because it may be possible that direct instruction leads to better grammar acquisition, better sentence structure, and better vocabulary. A future study may also want to determine how well teachers think their students speak the

target second language. This is important, because if teachers believe their students speak grammatically correct, exhibit proper sentence structure, and use new vocabulary words, then they will most likely spend less time on direct instruction. However, some teachers may feel these areas are where their students need the most help. Therefore, a future study may want to analyze if teachers' beliefs impact the amount of direct instruction that occurs in the immersion classroom.

Statement of the Hypothesis

Although there is a need for more research about the amount of direct instruction used in foreign language immersion programs, a great deal of research has shown that the main weakness of immersion programs is students' grammar acquisition, sentence structure, and vocabulary. From this generalization, it is possible to derive two hypotheses that future studies may want to analyze more fully. The researcher hypothesizes that direct instruction is essential for fluency, but is not emphasized in an elementary foreign language immersion program. This includes the instruction of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Teachers may be aware that direct instruction is necessary, but may not be able to spend enough time on these skills. Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes that this knowledge creates a conflict for teachers.

Methods

Participants

The accessible population for this study was selected from the website: www.cal.org. This address is the website for The Center for Applied Linguistics. This website has a list of all the immersion programs in the United States. It lists the programs by school district, and includes the following information as well: the type of immersion program (partial, total, or two-way), the number of students in the program, the grade levels of the program, the number of

schools in the district with immersion programs, the number of immersion teachers in the district, the language of the program, and a contact person in each district. The list is updated every two years, but has not been updated since 1996; therefore, the list may not be completely accurate. This list of immersion programs provides the researcher with 1,546 possible teachers in the United States to survey.

The researcher surveyed approximately 120 teachers. Fifty-three surveys were returned. This provided a response rate of 42%. The teachers were from various areas of the country, including, Oregon, Minnesota, Maryland, and Indiana. This was possible, because the list allowed the researcher access to all the immersion programs. All the teachers were elementary immersion teachers. The sample also included teachers of Spanish and French immersion programs. Forty (75.5%) participants teach in a Spanish immersion program, and 13 (24.5%) participants teach in a French immersion program. Nineteen percent teach in a partial immersion program, and 81% teach in a total immersion program.

The sample included 6 males, and 47 females. The participants in this study have been teaching an average of 3.4 [median=3, mode=3] years in an immersion program. Their students have been enrolled in an immersion program an average of 2.7 [median=3, mode=3] years. The teachers surveyed have had an average of 3.8 [median=4, mode=5] years of formal training in the language, and 100% are fluent in the language of instruction.

Instrument

A survey (see Appendix A), that was developed by the researcher, was given to the participants of this study. The survey was used to measure the amount of direct instruction used in the immersion program, determine how well teachers' feel their students speak the target language, and record demographic data. In order to assess the reliability of the survey, a pre-test

was given to colleagues of the researcher. The colleagues were asked to answer the questions, and note any potential problems with the survey. Changes were made to avoid ambiguity. Asking similar questions in a variety of different ways assessed the validity of the survey.

The first section of the survey asked demographic questions. Question number one asked about the teacher's gender in order to determine if an equal representation of both sexes exists; males and females may have a different perspective on immersion programs. Question number two was about the number of years the teacher has been teaching in an immersion setting, because more experienced teachers may use more or less direct instruction than less experienced teachers. Question number three was about what grade level the teachers teach, and question number four asked how long the students have been part of an immersion program. These questions are also essential to the data analysis. The students in the upper grades who have been enrolled in an immersion program for a number of years may experience different levels of proficiency than students just beginning an immersion program. In addition, there may be a difference in the amount of direct instruction used between beginning and more advanced students. Question five asked about the language of the immersion program, because the researcher wanted to ensure various languages are represented. The researcher also wants to determine if the language of instruction affects the amount of direct instruction or the level of proficiency of the students. The survey also assessed how many years of formal training the teachers have had in the target foreign language; this was question number six. This information is vital to the study, because teachers need a strong background in the language in order to effectively teach grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. For this same reason, the survey assessed how fluent immersion teachers are in the language of instruction in question number seven.

The researcher used a Likert scale in the second section of this survey, in order to assess the affective domain of the participants. The researcher believed a Likert scale is the most efficient way to determine teachers' opinions about their students' level of proficiency in the target language. The researcher believed this information is important, because teachers may base the amount of direct instruction they use on how well they think their students are performing. The teachers were asked to decide if their students never, occasionally, sometimes, frequently, or always exhibit the various statements provided. Statements such as: "My students speak grammatically correct in the target foreign language." and "My students exhibit proper sentence structure while speaking in the target foreign language." were included in order to determine how much difficulty students have with grammar and sentence structure.

The survey also included a third section that assessed the cognitive domain of the participants. The researcher was interested in finding out how much time immersion teachers spend on direct instruction in their classrooms. The teachers were asked to circle the correct responses. Questions such as: "How much time do you spend teaching grammar in the target language each week?" were asked to assess how much time teachers spend on direct instruction.

The fourth section of this survey assessed who decides how much direct instruction will be used in the classroom. The researcher wanted to know if individual teachers, groups of teachers, the principal, the superintendent, the state curriculum, or some other source makes this decision. The researcher was interested in knowing if teachers are satisfied with the amount of time they spend on direct instruction. The final question remained open-ended, because it is impossible to provide all the possible reasons. An open-ended question was more appropriate, because teachers were able to provide unique answers. The question: " If you had the ideal classroom situation, what changes, if any, would you make to the amount of time you spend on

direct instruction each week?" was asked, because the researcher was interested in analyzing different teachers' suggestions. In addition, the question further assessed how satisfied teachers are with the amount of time they spend on direct instruction. For example, if a teacher wishes to make a number of changes, he or she is probably not satisfied with the current situation.

Materials

The materials for this study included the surveys, stamps, and envelopes. The researcher also needed the mailing address of each of the participants. In addition, it was also necessary to include a self-addressed stamped envelope and the informed consent form (see Appendix C) with each of the surveys mailed out.

Design

The design of this study was quantitative survey analyses of the amount of time foreign language immersion teachers spend on direct instruction in the classrooms. Because this is not an experiment, there was only one group of participants: the group of immersion teachers. These participants were selected randomly from the list provided on the website. Although the selection was random, it was done in clusters by school district. The researcher randomly selected each school district, and all the elementary immersion teachers in that district became the participants. It was not possible to randomly select each teacher, because the list did not provide each teacher's name and address.

Procedure

The methods section of this study was carried out in a series of steps. The researcher began by developing the first copy of the survey (see Appendix A). She then gave the pre-test to her colleagues. Upon completion of the final survey, the survey, a description of the study, and the informed consent form was submitted to the Institutional Review Board.

While the researcher was waiting for a response, she began preparing the surveys for the first mailing. The researcher selected her random sample, and began contacting the contact person for each district in order to obtain the name and number of the superintendent of each school district. Upon approval from the IRB, the researcher began contacting the superintendent or other person in charge of the research and evaluation department in each school district. Once contacted, the researcher submitted the necessary forms to gain approval to conduct research in each school district. Once the approval was obtained from each district (see Appendix B), the first mailing was sent out. This occurred during the first week of September. The first mailing included the survey and the informed consent form (see appendix C). The first mailing had coded return envelopes; this helped the researcher determine which school districts had already sent the surveys back. It was not possible to determine which teachers sent the survey back, but the coded envelopes helped the researcher know which districts required a second mailing. Upon completion of both mailings, the researcher began her data analysis.

Upon completion of the data analysis, and writing the first draft of the results and discussion section, the researcher submitted the first draft of these sections to her professor and outside reader. After both read the first draft, final revisions were made.

Results

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted in this study. The researcher determined the mean of how well students speak grammatically correct, how often they exhibit proper sentence structure, how often they use new vocabulary words, and how often they use many vocabulary words. In addition to these analyses, the researcher also determined the mean amount of time teachers spend teaching grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary (Please see Table 1).

Table 1

Skill	Mean amount of time students exhibit skill	Mean amount of time teachers spend on direct instruction
Appropriate Grammar Acquisition	23 Teachers claim their students **SOMETIMES** speak grammatically correct	Less than 45 minutes/week (69 percent)
Appropriate Sentence Structure	17 teachers claim their students **SOMETIMES** exhibit proper sentence structure	Less than 30 minutes/week (55 percent)
Independently Use New Vocabulary Words	25 teachers claim their students **SOMETIMES** use new vocabulary words	46-60 minutes/week (30 percent)
Use a Variety of Vocabulary Words	21 teachers claim their students **SOMETIMES** use a variety of vocabulary words	46-60 minutes/week (30 percent)

The researcher was also able to calculate the mean amount of time teachers spend on direct instruction in all. The mean amount of time teachers spend teaching grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary was 2.1 [median=2.0, mode=1.33]. Therefore, teachers spend approximately 31-45 minutes a week on direct instruction. However, 25 people indicated they wish they could spend more time on these skills.

Qualitative analysis also revealed that, given the ideal classroom, many teachers would spend much more time on direct instruction. Six teachers reported they would like to spend at least 15-20 minutes a day teaching grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure as a formal class. Five additional teachers expressed a desire to conduct frequent mini-lessons as problems with these skills arise. Two teachers expressed a desire to teach grammar for an hour everyday. They reported that they would like to offer explicit instruction and practice, rather than only correcting students' speech. Three teachers expressed a desire for grammar books.

Despite these findings, twenty people did indicate that they were satisfied with the amount of time they spend on direct instruction. Qualitative findings report that 11 teachers prefer to integrate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary into content areas. They state that the purpose of immersion programs is to integrate these skills into all subject areas; they feel as if they teach these skills continuously. For example, grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary are taught in the context of reading and language arts. One teacher explained that her students learn grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary as they view and edit their writing.

Many teachers believe that children learn a great deal without formal instruction. They believe they learn grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary through modeling. These teachers believe students need to hear the language used in real situations. Many also explain that students benefit more from discussion and participation than learning the mechanics of the language. They believe proper grammar and sentence structure can be learned by eliciting correct grammar when a student responds, as well as by repeating students' incorrect statements using proper grammar and sentence structure.

Qualitative analysis seems to indicate that the teachers who are satisfied with the amount of time they spend on direct instruction are also the teachers who do not spend a great deal of time on these skills. However, a T-test revealed that there is a significant difference ($p = .024$) between the amount of time people spend on direct instruction, and how satisfied they are. The people who spend more than 45 minutes a week on direct instruction are generally more satisfied.

The data analysis also revealed some significant correlations. A positive significant ($p < .05$) correlation was found between the amount of time students are enrolled in an immersion

program, and how often they speak grammatically correct. A positive significant ($p < .05$) correlation was also found between the amount of time students are enrolled in an immersion program, and how often they exhibit proper sentence structure. A positive significant correlation ($p < .05$) was also found between the amount of time students are enrolled in an immersion program, and how often they use new vocabulary words. No correlation was found between the amount of time students are enrolled in an immersion program, and how often they use a variety of vocabulary words.

In addition, no significant difference was found between the amount of time teachers spend on grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, and how often these students exhibit these skills. In addition, there was no difference found between partial and total immersion programs.

A T-test also indicated that there is no significant difference between the amount of time teachers spend on direct instruction, and the type of immersion program that is in place. Therefore, teachers spend essentially the same amount of time on direct instruction in both partial and total immersion programs. In addition, there was no significant difference between the type of immersion program, and the level of students' proficiency. Student proficiency was determined by finding the mean of questions 8-11. Therefore, according to this survey, students enrolled in a partial immersion program speak at the same level of proficiency as students enrolled in a total immersion program.

However, qualitative analysis reports significantly different findings. Teachers of partial immersion programs express a desire to spend more time on direct instruction. Two teachers claim that they need 100% of the time to teach grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary; unfortunately, they only get half the day. Two other teachers explained that they are responsible

for teaching math and science. Because of this, grammar and sentence structure are not emphasized as much. Students are not expected to read and write as much as they would in language arts and reading.

Despite the difference between partial and total immersion programs, a T-test did reveal a significant difference ($p = .048$) between the amount of time students are enrolled in an immersion program, and how proficient they are in the language. Students who are enrolled in an immersion program for 3 or more years are more proficient in the target language than students who have been enrolled for less than three years.

These quantitative results seem to be parallel to the qualitative results. A number of teachers believe that students who are just beginning immersion programs should not be expected to exhibit proper grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. They also believe that formal lessons would not be beneficial, for students are not even trying to use these skills at this level. These skills are abstract concepts for young students. Instead, most teachers prefer to model appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. They claim students need to hear the oral language in as fluent a form as possible, for students learn a second language much like they learn their first. Therefore, these skills are developed through repetition, songs, and books.

Because teachers have such strong opinions about this subject, it is interesting to look at who decides how much time will be spent on direct instruction. Forty participants indicated they have some say in the amount of time they spend on direct instruction. Thirteen people indicated other teachers in the building make the decision. Three people said the principal has some say in the decision, but no one indicated that the superintendent of the district made the

decision. However, 13 participants indicated that they mandated curriculum determines how much time they need to spend on direct instruction.

Discussion

The results of this study do seem to support the researcher's hypotheses. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses show that although students do not frequently exhibit appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, direct instruction is not emphasized in many immersion classrooms. Most teachers spend 31-45 minutes a week on explicit instruction. In addition, the analyses also indicate that teachers are aware of this dilemma. However, teachers' opinions vary considerably. About half the teachers would like to spend more time on direct instruction, while the other half is comfortable integrating instruction into content areas.

These differences in opinion could be attributed to a number of things. Teachers could simply have different teaching styles. These styles may be comparable to the differences between an elementary teacher who uses a whole language approach, and another who uses a bottom-up approach and begins with lessons in phonics. Even in an English setting, the amount of direct instruction in each class varies considerably. Another possible reason may be the difference between grade levels. The results seem to suggest that primary immersion teachers spend much less time on direct instruction than teachers of intermediate grades do. Future researchers may want to analyze the difference between the amount of time teachers spend on direct instruction in the primary grades, and the amount of time teachers spend on these same skills in the intermediate grades.

Quantitative results suggest that teachers who are satisfied with the amount of time they spend on direct instruction spend over 45 minutes a week teaching these skills. However,

qualitative results seem to indicate that those teachers who are satisfied with the amount of time they spend on these skills are also the teachers who are comfortable integrating grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary into content areas. If this is true, then it is not possible that these teachers spend over forty-five minutes a week on direct instruction. Therefore, there seems to be a discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative results. Future researchers may want to determine who is satisfied with the amount of time they spend on direct instruction, and then further determine how much time they spend on these skills. Perhaps a more complete qualitative analysis on specific activities teachers use to teach grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary would be beneficial.

There also seems to be a discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative results in another area. Quantitative results suggest that students enrolled in a partial immersion speak at the same level of proficiency as students enrolled in a total immersion program. However, qualitative results indicate that teachers of partial immersion programs find students struggle with grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary a great deal. They feel they do not have enough time to properly teach these skills. These concerns seem to be accurate, because it is a common belief that students enrolled in a total immersion program are more proficient in the language. Therefore, the quantitative analysis is quite puzzling. It is definitely necessary to research the differences between partial and total immersion programs more thoroughly.

Despite the amount of time teachers spend on direct instruction, the results seem to suggest that students' grammar acquisition, sentence structure, and vocabulary improve as they move from grade level to grade level. This does not seem to be surprising, but it is reassuring to know that students' skills improve as they move through the program. It would be helpful to

know, however, how much progress is made over the years, and if students with more direct instruction improve at a greater rate.

Although this study does provide some significant results to this field of research, it obviously has a number of limitations. Future researchers need to be aware of these limitations, because the accuracy of these results will be increased if this study is replicated. Perhaps future researchers will be able to limit the number of limitations and receive more accurate results.

The design of this study does include random selection of participants; however, it was only possible to select participants through clusters, because the list of immersion programs only provides contact names for each school district. Teachers' names and addresses are not given. It was also not possible, in some cases, to decipher between elementary and high school immersion programs. Therefore, the researcher was forced into using school districts that only have elementary immersion programs. The study might have been more effective if it was possible to obtain a list of all the teachers in the United States, as well as the grade levels they teach. This would have helped the researcher ensure that equal representation of gender, language of instruction, and grade level existed. If this information were available, it would have been possible to obtain a completely random sample.

Because this study was a survey analysis of elementary immersion teachers, it was not possible to manipulate any variables. Because of this, there was some discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative results. Future researchers may want to design an experiment. One group of participants could receive direct instruction, and one group could be the control group. The researcher could also observe the type of activities that are used in the control group. Standardized tests or some other form of measurement could be used to assess the students'

progress. It would then be possible to determine how much direct instruction improves grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

However, the current study does provide useful information to this research field. It helped determine how much direct instruction is occurring in the classroom. This knowledge allows immersion teachers to compare how much time they spend on direct instruction with average amount of time teachers seem to be spending on these skills every week. Perhaps this study will aid immersion teachers in deciding how much time should be spent on direct instruction.

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Appendix A

Elementary Immersion Programs and the Amount of Direct Instruction In the Classroom

Section 1:
Please answer the following questions by either circling the correct response or filling in the blank.

1. What is your gender? Male Female

2. How long have you been teaching in an immersion program?

<1 year 1-2 years 3-4 years 5-6 years > than 6 years

3. What grade level(s) have you taught? _____

4. How long have your current students been enrolled in an immersion program (on average)?

<1 year 1-2 years 3-4 years 5-6 years > than 6 years

5. What is the target foreign language of your immersion program? _____

6. How many years of formal training have you had in the language of instruction?

<1 year 1-2 years 3-4 years 5-6 years > than 6 years

7. Are you fluent in the language of instruction? Yes No

Section 2:

For the following statements, please circle the number that most appropriately represents the behavior of your students.

	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
8. My students speak grammatically correct in the target foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5

9. My students exhibit proper sentence structure while speaking in the target foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My students use a variety of vocabulary words.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My students independently use new vocabulary words.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3:

Please answer the following questions by circling the correct response.

12. How much time do you spend teaching grammar each week?

<than 30 minutes 30-45 minutes 46-60 minutes 61-90 minutes >90 minutes

13. How much time do you spend teaching proper sentence structure each week?

<than 30 minutes 30-45 minutes 46-60 minutes 61-90 minutes >90 minutes

14. How much time do you spend each week on vocabulary instruction?

<than 30 minutes 30-45 minutes 46-60 minutes 61-90 minutes >90 minutes

Section 4:

Please answer the following questions by placing a check next to all the responses that apply.

15. Who decides how much time will be spent teaching grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary in your immersion classroom?

_____ I do
_____ The others teachers in the building
_____ The principal at my school
_____ The superintendent of the district
_____ The mandated curriculum
_____ Other (please explain) _____

16. How do you feel about the amount of time you spend teaching grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary each week?

_____ I am satisfied with the amount of time that I spend on these skills
_____ I wish I could spend more time on these skills
_____ I wish I could spend less time teaching these skills
_____ I have no opinion on this matter

Section 5:
Please answer the following question in your own words.

17. If you had the ideal classroom situation, how much time would you spend teaching grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary each week? Please explain your answer.

Appendix B

Kari Roberts
Marist College MSC 13018
290 North road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
(914) 575-4456

Dear Superintendent:

My name is Kari Roberts. I am currently completing my Masters Degree in Educational Psychology at Marist College. To attain this degree, I am required to complete a research thesis during the upcoming summer.

The topic I have chosen for my thesis is Elementary Foreign Language Immersion Programs, and the Amount of Direct Instruction Used in the Classroom. I am conducting an anonymous survey which elementary immersion teachers will be asked to fill out. I hope to use the knowledge and opinions of the teachers to determine the current status of this issue within the schools.

I have randomly selected various schools districts in the United States to participate in this study. Therefore, your elementary school(s) have been chosen to participate in the survey. I would appreciate your participation, however, you are under no obligation to do so. You can refuse to participate or terminate your participation in the survey at any time.

If I receive your acceptance letter, I will immediately distribute surveys to elementary foreign language immersion teachers in the district. I have attached a copy of the letter and survey which each teacher will receive.

The results of my study will be available from Marist College after September 1998. If you have any concerns or questions, you can contact me at (914) 575-4456 or my supervising professor at Marist College, Dr. David Rule at (914) 575-3000.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kari Roberts

I have read the above information concerning participation in the survey, and I understand that I am under no obligation to agree to participate.

I agree to allow elementary foreign language immersion teachers in my school district to participate, with their permission.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

School District: _____

Appendix C

Kari Roberts
Marist College MSC 13018
290 North Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Dear Teacher:

My name is Kari Roberts. I am currently completing my Masters Degree in Educational Psychology at Marist College. To attain this degree, I am required to complete a research thesis during the upcoming summer.

The topic I have chosen for my thesis is Elementary Foreign Language Immersion Programs, and the Amount of Direct Instruction Used in the Classroom. I am attempting to discover your views regarding this issue. I hope to determine if immersion programs are using direct instruction in the classroom.

I have randomly selected various schools in the United States to participate in this study. Therefore, you have been chosen to receive this survey. As an elementary immersion teacher, the information you can provide to me is vital to my research. I have received permission from your superintendent for your participation. I would appreciate it if you would take ten minutes to fill out the survey and return it to me in the self addressed stamped envelope provided as soon as possible. Of course, the survey is voluntary and you may terminate your participation at any time. This survey is ANONYMOUS! I will not know your identity at any time throughout the research process.

To ensure your permission to participate in this survey, I ask that you please sign your name at the bottom of this letter. Please tear off the permission slip, and send it back to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope. I will be sure to place the survey and the permission slip in two different piles, which will not allow me to determine which survey is yours.

The results of my survey will be available from Marist College after September 1998. If you have any concerns or questions, you can contact me at (914) 575-4456 or my supervising professor at Marist College, Dr. David Rule at (914) 575-3000.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kari Roberts

I allow Kari Roberts to use the information I provided on this survey for her research project on elementary immersion programs and the amount of direct instruction used in the classroom. I understand that this information will not be used for any other purpose, and that my identity will remain anonymous at all times. I also understand that my participation is anonymous, and I can terminate at any time.

Please sign your name here: _____